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Recommended Course of Action

We believe it would be desirable to await action by any bloc country and not take the initiative of breaking off relations with it. The onus for this action would thus rest on the regime in question which could be psychologically important vis-a-vis the peoples of the country and the world at large. (The disposition of Cardinal Mindszenty would be a special problem in Hungary.) Whether or not it appeared desirable to evacuate dependants from bloc countries should depend on the overall situation and not be undertaken solely in retaliation for the Soviet action. This and other actions such as recalling Chiefs of Mission would, in any case, have minimal impact. Any of these actions should be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Should the U.S.S.R. break off relations with the U.S. and induce its bloc partners to do likewise, one objective would seem to be to give the appearance that the U.S. was being isolated over the Cuban issue. This assumption would be heightened if the U.S.S.R. and its partners failed to take similar action against another Western country. In this instance, it might be desirable to seek to induce retaliatory action by certain Western states. States which might be considered for such an approach would be those Latin American countries maintaining diplomatic relations with bloc countries and our NATO allies. With regard to the Latin American countries, a determination should be made that all Latin American countries in this category would be prepared to take the desired action; otherwise, the solid Latin American backing obtained in the OAS on the U.S. quarantine action would appear to be cracking. Similar considerations should be applied to the NATO partnership. In addition, however, more compelling considerations would appear relevant in the latter case.

Unless we were on the brink of war, it would hardly be desirable to press our NATO allies to break relations thereby cutting off all meaningful channels of communication except for the UN and the contacts it affords. Moreover, it can be assumed that some, at least, of our NATO allies would strongly resist any such pressures on our part. They would feel that any such concerted action would greatly and unnecessarily heighten tensions and limit their ability to serve in any particular role which some are bound to be thinking about. Similarly, an intelligence gathering function by those of our allies with the necessary capability would, however circumscribed, be of considerable value, to say nothing of the diplomatic conversations which our allies would inevitably have with bloc leaders on subjects of great interest to us.